

## Remembering Michael Szkolnik

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By John Zakour

GENEVA, NY: Cornell University professor emeritus Michael Szkolnik, 81, of 2815 Pre-Emption Road, in Geneva, died on Tuesday, March 26, at Geneva General Hospital. Szkolnik was a plant pathologist at the New York State Agricultural Experiment Station in Geneva, NY, whose work on the biology and control of fungal disease of fruit trees was internationally recognized.

"Mike's work on fungicides and their physical modes of action is cited today as pioneering work that led to the development of new strategies for the application of fungicides," said Thomas Burr, chairman of the Plant Pathology Department.

At the height of his program, Szkolnik maintained an inventory of some 3,000 potted apple, pear, peach and cherry nursery stock trees and about a thousand pots of apple and other seedlings for year-round research on the biology and control of tree fruit diseases. In particular, he focused on fire blight, cherry leaf spot, cedar-apple rust, apple varietal resistance to scab and powdery mildew, apple fruit rots in storage, pathogen resistance to fungicides, fungicide threshold levels, and the mechanics of fungicide spray control.

Szkolnik was a leader in the identification of fungicide resistance in apple scab fungus. His broad-spectrum program advanced basic knowledge in the field of plant pathology and helped fruit growers in New York and elsewhere improve and update their control of orchard disease.

"In addition to being an excellent researcher, Mike had a great desire to serve the New York fruit industry," said Burr. "He often conducted experiments in orchards in Wayne County and Western New York and was well known by growers, extension personnel and members of the chemical industry."



Michael Szkolnik

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Szkolnik, who was born in Clifton, New Jersey, on August 23, 1920, received a B.S. in biochemistry in 1943, and a PhD. in plant pathology in 1949, both from Rutgers University. From 1943 to 1946, he served as a medical technician in the U.S. Army, where he received further training in chemistry, bacteriology, and serology. From 1949 to 1951, he worked for Experimental Plantations, Inc., a subsidiary of Merck and Company. He was appointed assistant professor at Cornell in 1951, associate professor in 1954, and full professor in 1961. He retired in 1984.

Szkolnik was a member of the American Phytopathological Society, the New York State Horticultural Society, and the New York State Academy of Sciences. He was the author of numerous scientific publications.

Szkolnik is survived by his wife of 57 years, Louise 'Eleanor'; his daughters, Linda Szkolnik of Rochester, Doris Benarab of Canandaigua and Joan Szkolnik Camp of Geneva; sons Michael (Donna) Szkolnik of Mississippi and John Szkolnik of Rochester; nine grandchildren; one great-grandchild; a brother, Alex Szkolnik, of Florida; sisters Julie Visinten of Richmond, Va., Stephanie Parmentier of Massachusetts, and Katherine Taylor of Winter Haven, Fla; and several nieces and nephews.

Memorial contributions may be made to the Geneva Free Library or to the Geneva Y.M.C.A.

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